The pilgrimage of a Sabaean woman

Mohammed Maraqten

ملخص البحث: محمد مرقطن، **إمرأة سبئية تؤدي فريضة الحج**: هذه دراسة لنقش سبئي يتكون من ستة سطور مكتوب بخط الزبور على عسيب من النخل، وهو عبارة عن تقرير يتحدث عن زيارة قامت بها امرأة سبئية لمدينة شبام (سخيم) الواقعة شمال شرق صنعاء لتأدية فريضة الحج للإله قينان. وصاحبة النقش هي حيو-شاف بنت تحي-لي أمة بني عثكلان. والنص مؤرخ بناء على النظام السبئي للتأريخ بأسماء الاشخاص (الأبونيم). ويمكن تأريخ هذا النقش بناء على شكل الخط إلى القرن الأول الميلادي.

Abstract: This study concerns a Sabaean six-line text engraved in Zabūr-script on a palm-leaf stalk. It records the pilgrimage of a woman to the god Qaynān in the city of Šibām Suḫaym, northeast of Ṣanʿāʾ. The owner of the text is called Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay who describes herself as a member of the clan Banū ʿUṯkulān. It is dated according to the Sabaean eponym system. Our text might be dated according to the paleography to the first century CE.

This inscribed wooden stick is in a private collection and its provenance is unknown (figure 5). However, it probably comes from the area where other texts of its type have been found, that is, the Yemeni Jawf (Ryckmans et al. 1994). The text not only provides new information about religion in ancient South Arabia, but it also tells us more about the status of women in Sabaean society at the time. It has been assigned the siglum M-SAS 1 (= Maraqten-South Arabian Sticks).[1]

The inscription belongs to the category of South Arabian texts written on wood, a category that includes inscribed wooden sticks.[2] In fact, one of the greatest events in Yemen over the last three decades, in particular during the 1990s, has been the discovery of thousands of these small, valuable objects. They are probably the most unique documents ever to come from the ancient Near East. The wood used is primarily palm-leaf stalks (*ʿasīb*, pl. *ʿusub*), but wood from the *ʿilb*-tree (*Zizyphus spina Christi*) and from other trees is also known (Maraqten 1998). Most measure from between 10-30 cm in length and 2-5 cm in width and their texts can vary from one to 15 lines in length. Their provenance is the Yemeni Jawf and in particular the town of Al-Sawdāʾ, known in ancient times as Naššān. Apparently these documents were stored in the temple of the supreme South Arabian god ʿAṯtar in Naššān, and belonged either to its archives or to the archives of administration buildings. The inscriptions contain essential data about everyday life and the socio-economic structure of ancient Yemen. In fact, they consist of

1 Photographs have been taken by the author.

2 The majority of these sticks have been not found in scientific excavations. Fortunately, thousands of them have been acquired from the Ṣanʿāʾ market and are now stored in Yemeni museums such as the Ṣanʿāʾ National Museum and the Military Museum in Ṣanʿāʾ. Hundreds are in European museums such as in Leiden and Munich, in addition to private collections. Unfortunately, more than half of these are fakes. On the importance of these texts, see Ryckmans et al 1993, Maraqten 2014, and Stein 2010.



Figure 2



Figure 1

correspondence, accounts, transactions, contracts and private agreements, abecedaries, debts, decrees, receipts, lists of names of persons, clans and tribes, as well as school exercises (Maraqten 2003: 273-86, Maraqten 2014). In addition to giving us new data about the status and role of women in society, they also provide us with new information about social institutions, agriculture, trade, religion, chronology, language, paleography, and the history of ancient Yemen (Ryckmans et al. 1994, Stein 2010, Maraqten 2014). These documents can be dated to approximately ca. the 10th century BCE to the 6th century CE.

The documents are written primarily in the Sabaic language. This is the best-known language of all old South Arabian languages. Aside from the problem of deciphering this dialect, which has its peculiarities, the most difficult aspect of translation is the new script used to inscribe them. Nevertheless, the decipherment, which started with the first discovery of these texts in the early 1970s (Beeston 1989: 15-19), has now reached a satisfying stage (Ryckmans 2001: 223-235).

M-SAS 1 is carefully engraved in six lines on either side of a palm-leaf stalk (figure 1-4). There are three lines on the recto and three on the verso. At the end of line six, the scribe has added his signature. Aside from slight damage at the end of line four, the text is complete and in very good condition. It measures 23 x 2.8 cm. Facsimiles have been produced by the author.

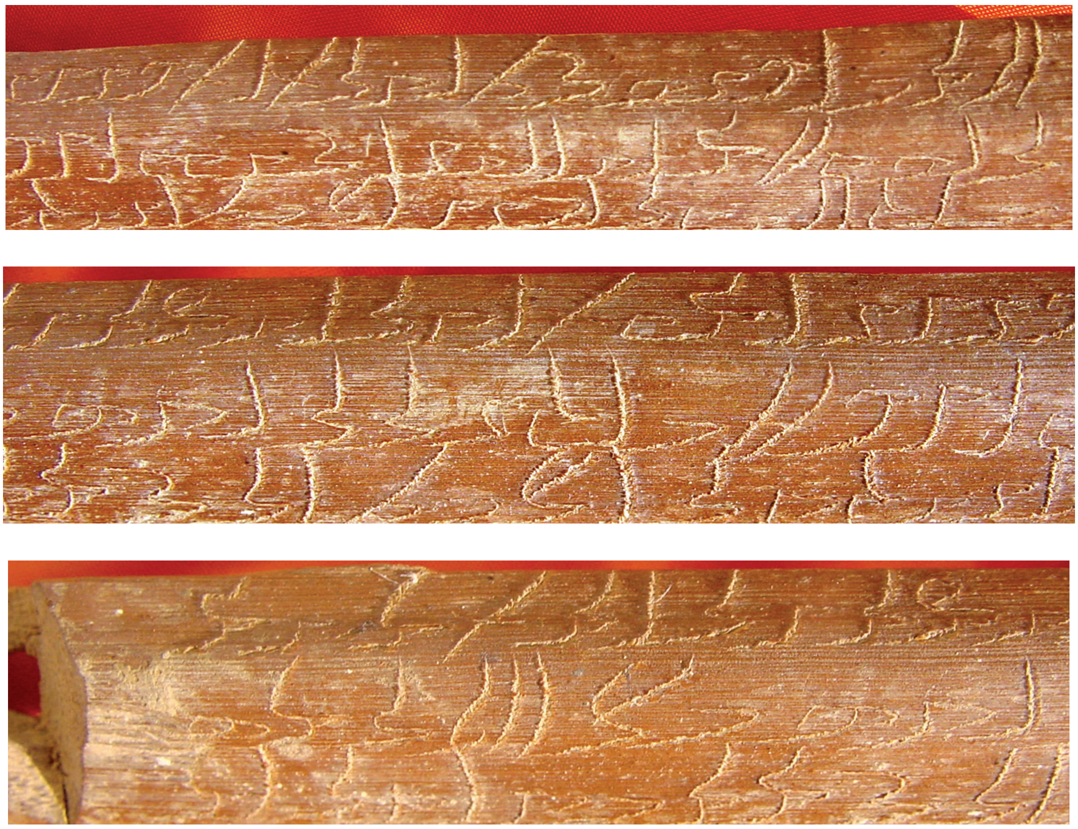


Figure 3



Figure 4

The text reads from right to left as follows:

Recto (figure 1, 3):

1) *ḏkr / ḥyws^{2}f / bnt / tḥyly / ʾmt / bn / ʿṯkln / kts^{1}bʾ*
2) *n / wmḍʾ / ʿdy / s^{2}bmm / lḥḏr / qynn / bwrḫ / ḏns^{1}w*
3) *r / qdmn / gyl / ḫrf / yʿqbn / ḫrf / ns^{2}ʾkrb / bn / s^{1}*

Verso (figure 2, 4):

4) *mhkrb / bn / ḥzfrm / ḏḍmrn / wqynn / ʾlh / ḫs^{1}ʾm / ls^{2}?*
5) *rḥ / ʾmthw / ḥyws^{2}f / kys^{2}fnh / bnkl / nkym / wqmtm*
6) *wkwn / ḏn / ʿlmn / bḏns^{1}wr / ḏmḏn / ḫrfn / ḥyws^{2}f / bnt / tḥyly.* Signature

Translation

1) A declaration of Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay, female vassal of the clan Banī ʿUṯkulān that she should carry out a journey
2) and proceed into (the city) of Šibāmum to perform the pilgrimage of (the God) Qaynān in the month of Ḏū-Naswar
3) the first. (This was) in the period of the (eponymate) year, which succeeds the (eponymate) year of Našaʾkarib, son
4) Sumukarib of the clan Ḥazfarum, of the family Ḏū-Ḍumrān. May Qaynān the god of Ḫasaʾum save

5) His worshipper Ḥaywšāf so as to protect her against every mischief and misfortune.
6) And this document was marked in the month D̲ū-Naswar, which is in the same eponymate year. Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay. Signature

Paleographic notes:

Our new document is engraved in the South Arabian script designated by scholars as the minuscule or *Zabūr*-script. The term derives from the Sabaic root ZBR "to write" (TYA 5/6-7). It is worthwhile mentioning here that in ancient Yemen two forms of scripts can be distinguished; the Musnad-script and the Zabūr-script: The *Musnad*-script is the name generally given by early Arabic authors of the Islamic period to the script of the ancient civilization of Yemen. It is formal and monumental in style and normally restricted to inscriptions on hard material, primarily stone and bronze. The Zabūr-script is a minuscule script used for inscribing wood. It is a cursive script developed from the Musnad-script (figure 6). The term Zabūr-script is known from Arabic classical sources, in particular for the writing of pre-Islamic poetry (Ryckmans et al. 1994, Maraqten 1998). Notably, a considerable number of these sticks are inscribed with the monumental Musnad-script, even in a very archaic style that gives the impression that wood was used alongside stone for inscriptions from the earliest times onwards. No doubt the development of the minuscule script was associated with writing on wood (Ryckmans 2001: 223-235).[3] However, the Zabūr-script derived from the Musnad-script used on the wooden sticks.

The eponym attested in our text occurs for the first time and is not mentioned in monumental inscriptions. The standard Zabūr-script used for our inscription can be classified according to J. Ryckmans (2001: 231) to phase (IVa). This phase has been dated by C14 to the first century BCE and the first half of the first century CE (Drewes et al. 2014). Our text might be tentatively dated to the first century CE on the basis of the paleography.

Philological Commentary:

Lines 1-2:

The text starts with the term, *d̲kr* "declaration, record," followed by a feminine

3 Recent discoveries of epigraphic material found under the aegis of the American Foundation for the Study of Man in the Awām-Temple/Maḥram Bilqīs, have proven that the Zabūr-script was also engraved on hard material such as alabaster (Maraqten, unpublished). In addition, several Sabaean texts inscribed in the Zabūr-script are now known in the D̲amār area and are in the D̲amār Museum. They have the Siglum ThUM 34 (Avanzini, http://www.csai.humnet.unipi.it). More have also recently been noted in Raymat Ḥumayd in Sanḥān, near Ṣanʿāʾ (cf. also Maraqten 2014).

personal name and then her patronymic. The Sabaic root ḎKR is attested several times in juridical contexts and means "mention, record;" cf. the noun *ḏkr,* "mention, record." In Sabaic the noun *ḏkr* has a specific meaning, "declaration, notification" (Sab.Dict., 38). Further, the noun *ḏkr* is attested in legal texts, particularly in contract formulas on South Arabian texts incised in wood; it means "accord, agreement, protocol, declaration." In one text concerning an agreement between the owner of farm animals and a herdsman, the contract is described as *ḏkr / nḫt* "a contract concerning beasts" (YM 10 230/1).[4] The root ḎKR also occurs on recently discovered Sabaic texts inscribed on wood, as the opening formulas of agreements; *ḏt / yḏkrn* "this is what he has declared" (YM 23 251/1);[5] cf. the formula *ḏt / tḏkrn / mgdnʿm,* "This is what (the woman) Magdnuʿm has declared" on an inscribed stick from the collection of the National Museum of Ṣanʿāʾ (YM 10 826/1)].[6]

The root ḎKR/ZKR is common in Semitic languages (Koehler/Baumgartner 1967- 1995 I: 258 ff., Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: 321-31); cf. Sabaic *ḏkr* "declaration, notification" (Sab.Dict., 38); cf. Arabic *ḏakra* "to remember, bear in mind, think, mention" and Arabic *ḏikr* "report, account;" North West Semitic *zkr/dkr* (Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995: 321-31)]. In Ugaritic *ḏkr* means "remember, mention, name" (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003: 286) and Biblical Aramaic *dokrān* "Protokollbuch" from the root DKR (Esra 4, 15, Koehler/Baumgartner 1967-1995 V: 1693). However, the term *ḏkr* in our text might be translated as "protocol, declaration;" i.e., the woman Ḥaywšāf made a declaration (*ḏkr*) about her pilgrimage that she is going to carry out for the God Qaynān in Šibām.

The woman is called *ḥyws²f / bnt / tḥyly* "Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay." Usually South Arabian inscriptions start with the individual's personal name, followed by his or her epithet or cognomen, then the patronymic or father's name, and then the name of their tribe or clan. In our text only the patronymic of the woman Ḥaywšāf is mentioned, which in this case is the name of her mother, and after that her social status is indicated. The occurrence of the mother's name instead of the father's name is attested several times in Sabaean texts. This can be considered as evidence for matrilineal clans in ancient South Arabia (Ryckmans 1986: 407-417, Korotayev 1995: 83-98, Maraqten 2008: 238 ff.).

The first name *ḥyws²f* is attested here for the first time in South Arabian inscriptions. The name *ḥyws²f*/Ḥaywšāf is a compound of *ḥyw* and *s²f*. The term *ḥyw* is frequently attested in South Arabian personal names, for example the female names *ḥyt, ḥytnnʿm, ḥywt* and *ḥywnʿm* (Sholan 1999: 124ff.). Further, for the element *ḥyw* in South Arabian personal names, see *ḥym, ḥyw,* and *ḥywm* in Hayajneh 1998: 126. The verbal element *s²f* is derived

4 Maraqten 2014.

5 When the text YM 23 251 was published, (Abdallah 1994), 4 belonged to a private collection and later was acquired by the National Museum of Ṣanʿāʾ; cf. Maraqten 2014.

6 The texts YM 10 230 and YM 10 826 have been prepared for publication by the author and will appear shortly (Maraqten 2014).

from the Sabaic root S^{2}WF "to protect, to see" (Sab.Dict., 136). The name *ḥyws^{2}f* might be translated as "the life is protected."

The name of the mother *ḥyws^{2}f*/Ḥaywšāf is *tḥyly*, Taḥylay. The name *tḥy-ly* is compounded from the verbal element *tḥy* and the theophoric element *ly*. The theophoric name *ly* in personal names has been interpreted by J. Ryckmans as an abbreviation of Lāh; for example the Sabaean woman's name *ḥywn-ly*, Ryckmans translates as, "Make me live, Lāh!" or "Lāh has made me live" (Ryckmans 1975: 63, cf. Sholan 1999: 125). We have a parallel for this name from a Sabaean inscription from Haram: The owner of the inscription Haram 56/1 = CIH 568/1 is described as, *mrglt / bt / tḥyly* "Margilat, daughter of Taḥylay." This text is similar to ours in that a woman bearing the name Margilat mentions she is the daughter of Taḥylay.[7] The personal name *tḥy-ly* should be considered female and the name of her mother.[8] Attention should be paid to the fact that the theophoric element *ly* is only attested in women names. The name *tḥy-ly* might be translated as "May you grant life, O Lay." For parallels of compound women's names with the verbal element *tḥy,* cf. *tḥyʾb, tḥyʾl*, see Sholan 1999: 153 ff.

Bn / ʿṯkln, Banū ʿUṯklān is a famous Sabaean clan mentioned many times in Sabaean inscriptions; clan members were living in the Sabaean capital Mārib and in the Jawf (Ja 563/6, Ja 589/3, Ja 656/4 etc., cf. Jamme 1962). Ḥaywšāf, the daughter of Taḥylay, designates herself *ʾmt / bn / ʿṯkln*. The word *ʾmt* means "client, servant, bondwoman, female vassal." A man described or designated *ʿbd* "client, servant" of a tribe, or a woman as *ʾmt,* is widespread in ancient Yemen, especially in the Middle Sabaean period. It has been compared to the use of *mawālī* "clients, feudal tenant"[9] in the Islamic period. The term *ʾmt* is also attested on several inscribed sticks (e.g., YM 11 279, s. Maraqten 2014).

The woman's main purpose in writing the document was apparently to declare that she, Ḥaywšāf, had performed a pilgrimage to the god Qaynān, as recorded in the second line of the inscription. *K-ts^{1}bʾn / w-mḍʾ*: The verbal form *ts^{1}bʾn* is the third person feminine singular imperfect from the root S^{1}Bʾ "(to) carry out an undertaking, e.g. military expedition, diplomatic mission, commercial journey, religious pilgrimage, work of construction" (Sab.Dict., 122). The Sabaic prefix-conjugation was constructed as *yfʿln* for the masculine singular and *tfʿln* for the feminine singular (Stein 2006: 189). The verbal form *ts^{1}bʾn* is followed by the infinitive *mḍʾ*. This root is attested as MẒʾ in Sabaean monumental inscriptions as, "go, proceed, march" (Sab.Dict., 89).[10] On the inscribed sticks the verb *mḍʾ* is attested several times with the meaning, "to arrive, to reach," cf. the following phrase: *w-hmw / f-mḍʾw / mr ^{3}b* "and they arrived Mārib" (TYA 9/2-3, Ryckmans et al 1994: 91); cf. *w-s^{1}ṭr / s^{1}ṭr-k / b-ʿm / rḥbm / f-mḍʾ* "and the letter you have

7 Robin 1992: 126.

8 The personal name tḥyly is not considered by A. Sholan (1999) to be a woman's name.

9 Preißler 1997: 133-141.

10 On the syntax of this phrase, cf. Beeston 1984: 22 § 8:2.

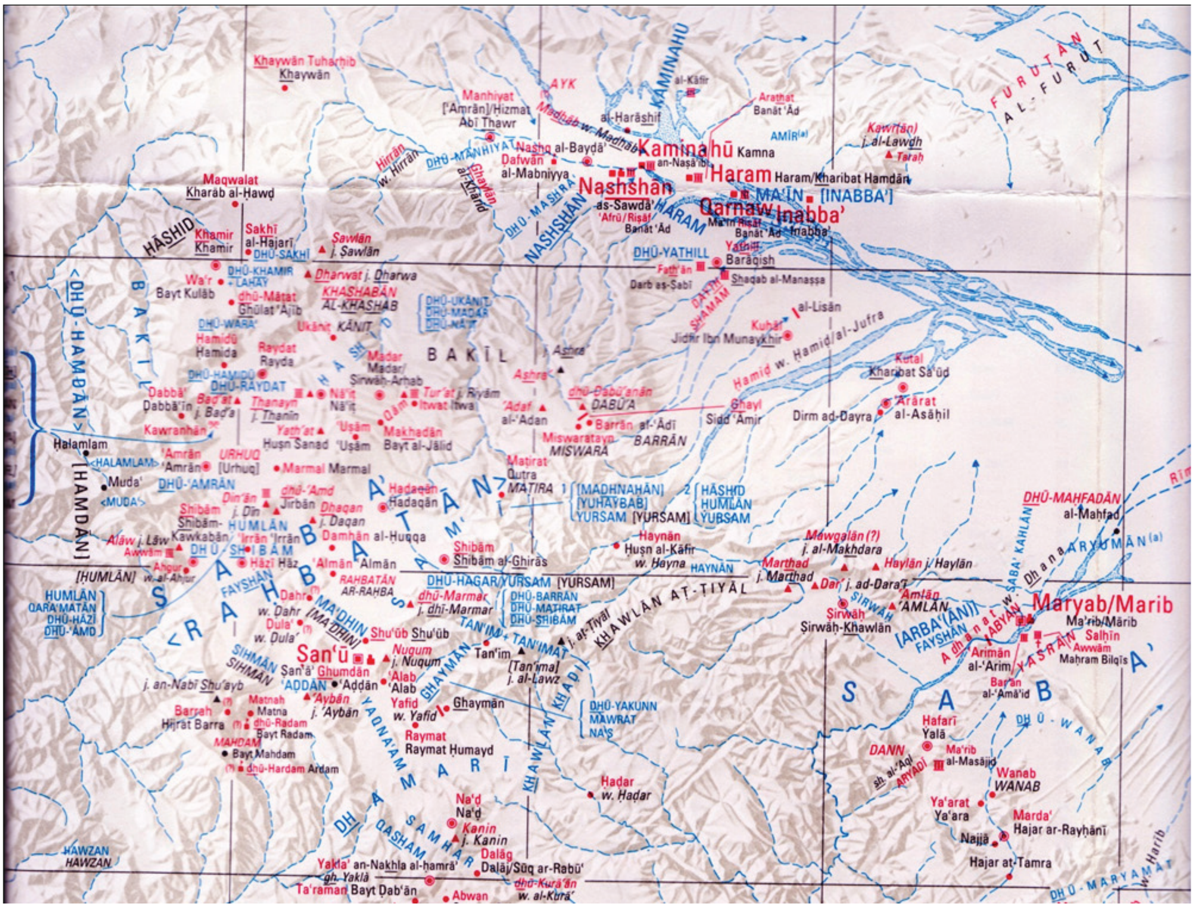


Figure 5: A map of the Sabaean area showing Šibām and Mārib (Robin/Brunner 1997)

written arrived with Riḥābum" (Mon.script. sab. 68/2-3, cf. Weninger 2002: 217-223); cf. Biblical Hebrew *mṣʾ* "finden, erreichen, imstande sein" (Koehler/Baumgartner 1967-1995 II: 585 ff.), Aramaic *mṭʾ* "to reach, to arrive" (DNWSI, 616), Ugaritc *mẓʾ* "to meet, run into" (Del Olmo Lete/Sanmartín 2003: 608); Geʿez *maṣʾa* "come, happen to, occur to, come up, arise" (Leslau 1991: 369 ff.), Akkadian *maṣū* (AHw, 621 ff.).

The particle *ʿdy* means "to, into." The palace name *s²bmm,* Šibām is well attested in the inscriptions. However, three cities in ancient and modern Yemen have the same name; one is located in the wadi Ḥaḍramawt, northwest of Ṣanʿāʾ, one in Šibām Kaukabān and the third northeast of Ṣanʿāʾ. The latter is the one mentioned in our text because in inscriptions, Šibām Suḫaym or Shibām Al-Ġirās is associated with the god Qaynān (figure 5).[11]

The task of this journey is *l-ḥḍr / qynn* "to perform the pilgrimage of (the God) Qaynān." The infinitive *ḥḍr* is derived from the root ḤḌR. The Sabaic verb *ḥḍr* means "to celebrate a feast, to hold a festival for a deity, perform a pilgrimage," as well as "to offer;" cf. the noun *ḥḍr* (Pl *ʾḥḍr*) "festival,

11 See the epigraphic evidence for šbm in Al-Sheiba 1988: 36; Bāsalāma 1993: 23ff. and *von Wissmann* 1964: 319ff., 333ff.

pilgrimage;" *mḥḍr* "festival hall" and *mḥḍrt* "a kind of an altar" (Maraqten 1994: 169 ff.); cf. Minaic *ḥḍr* "parvis" (Arbach 1993: 47). For the etymology of *ḥḍr*, cf. Arabic *ḥaḍara* "to be present, be in the presence (of), attend;" *ḥuḍūr* "presence, visit."

Line 3:

After stating the purpose of the pilgrimage, the date of its performance according to the Sabaean eponym system is given: This phrase reads: *b-wrḫ / ḏ-ns*^{1}*wr / qdmn / gyl / ḫrf / yʿqbn / ḫrf / ns*^{2}*ʾkrb / bn / s*^{1}*mhkrb / bn / ḥzfrm / ḏ-ḍmrn*. The expression *b-wrḫ / ḏ-ns*^{1}*wr /qdmn* means, "in the month of Ḏū-Naswar, the first." The month name *ḏ-ns*^{1}*wr* is attested frequently in Sabaean inscriptions.[12] The word *ḫrf* here means "year," i.e. the eponymate year. The imperfect verbal form *yʿqbn*, (root ʿQB*)* means "to follow" (Sab.Dic., 18), cf. Arabic *ʿaqaba* "to follow, succeed, after." The term *qdmn,* in relation to the names of months, means "the first." In conjunction with the month name *ḏ-ns*^{1}*wr / qdmn* we have *ḏ-ns*^{1}*wr / ʾḫrn* "Ḏū-Naswar, the second" in the inscriptions. Similar dating formulas using the *ʿqb* are attested in texts inscribed on the palm leaf stalks. For example, *b-[wr]ḫ / ḏ-s*^{1}*ḥr / ḏ-ḫrf / yʿqbn / ḫrf / ʾbkrb / b* ^{7}*n / ḥywm / bn / ḥzfrm* "in the month Ḏū-Saḥār of the (eponymate) year that followed the (eponymate) year of Abkarib son of Ḥaywum of (the clan) Hazfarum" (TYA 11/6-7, Ryckmans et al 1994: 95). The Sabaic term *gyl* means "period, course of a season" (Sab.Dict., 52); (cf. Arabic *ǧīl* "generation"). The following Sabaic date formula is a good example of the same in our text: The eponymate is *ns*^{2}*ʾkrb / bn / s*^{1}*mhkrb* "Našaʾkarib, son of Sumuhukarib." He is from the tribe Ḥazfarum, specifically Ḏu-Ḍamrān. The clan *ḥzfrm* was part of a noble Sabaean clan in charge of the office of the eponymate. It is attested frequently in the inscriptions (Robin 1994: 243 ff.) and was one of the so-called *maṯāmina*.[13] The clan name *ḏ-ḍmrn*, Ḏū-Ḍamrān is attested several times in Sabaean inscriptions, cf. *ʾhl / ḍmrn / ʾdm / wdm* "people of Ḍamrān, worshippers of the (god) Waddum" (RES 299/2, 3); this clan is also mentioned in the inscription RES 3792/18. That the clan occurs here as a subdivision of the famous Sabaean tribe *ḥzfrm* is recounted not only in this inscription, but also in other Sabaean monumental inscriptions, and in the following dating formula; *b-wrḫ / ḏ-nylm / ḏ-ḫrf / s*^{1}*mhkrb / bn / wddʾl / bn / ḥzfrm / ḏ-ḍmrn* "in the month of Ḏū-Haubas of the eponymate year of Sumuhukarib, Son of Wadadʾil of the tribe Ḥazfarum of (the subdivision clan) Ḏū-Ḍamrān" (Fakhry 30/8-9).[14] There are other clans or subdivisions of the *ḥzfrm* that occur in dating formulae, for example, *b-wrḫ / ḏ- hwbs*^{1} */ ḏ-ḫrf / bʿṯtr / bn / ʾbʾmr / bn / ḥzfrm / ḏ-mtbʿm* "in the month Ḏū-Haubas of the eponymate year of ʾAbʾamar of Ḥazfarum of (the subdivision clan) Ḏū-Matbaʿum" (YM 23 251, cf. Abdallah 1994: 3 ff.). *Ḏ-mtbʿm* has been suggested as a proper name and the subdivision family of the clan Ḥazfarum (Bron/Lafont 2003: 129-133).

Lines 5-6:

12 Beeston 1956.

13 Robin 1991: 829-832.

14 Kitchen 2000: 179.

The dating formula for the pilgrimage is followed by an invocation to the god Qaynān to protect his worshiper Ḥaywšāf. There is slight damage to the end of the forth line. However, the two letters after the divider may be read as / *l* / and / *s*^{2} /. The first letter in line five seems to be / *r* / and the letter after that is quite likely / *ḥ* /. The most probable reading then is *l-s*^{2}*rḥ*. This word can be understood as the infinitive of S^{2}RḤ, which is well attested in Sabaic and means, "to deliver, preserve" (Sab.Dict., 134). — *ʾmt-hw / ḥyws*^{2}*f* means, "his worshipper Ḥaywšāf;" the suffix *–hw* relates to Qaynān. The phrasing of the invocation may be read as, *w-qynn / ʾlh / ẖs*^{3}*ʾm / ls*^{2}*rḥ[?] / ʾmthw / ḥyws*^{2}*f / k-ys*^{2}*fn-h;* "May Qaynān the god of Ḫasaʾum save His worshipper Ḥaywšāf so as to protect her" *bn-kl / nkym / w-qmtm* "against every mischief and misfortune." — *k-ys*^{2}*fn-h* (concerning the verb *s*^{2}*wf*, cf. the discussion under the name *ḥyws*^{2}*f*). The noun *nky* means "mischief" (Sab.Dict., 96); *qmt* means, "some kind of misfortune" (Sab.Dict., 105).

Of significance are two dates cited in the text, one marking the performance of the pilgrimage and the other noting when the document was written. The phrase reads; *w-kwn / ḏn / ʿlmn / b-ḏns*^{1}*wr / ḏ-m-ḏn / ẖrfn:* "And this document was marked in the month Ḏū-Naswar, which is in the same eponymate year." Such double-dating can be found in other documents (e.g., TYA 11).

Since the owner of the document wrote her name and her *ḥyws*^{2}*f / bnt / tḥyly* within a prescribed formula, and the inscription seems to have been signed by a scribe, we are led to conclude that the document was probably written by a professional scribe, dictated by Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay.

On the significance of the performance of a pilgrimage in ancient Yemen in the light of our text:

The act of pilgrimage is known in all cultures and especially in the ancient Near East. It was an important religious rite among pre-Islamic Arabs mentioned by Classical Arab authors as occurring not only at Mecca but also in other holy places such as Riyām in Yemen (e.g. the ancient pilgrimage place for the god Taʾlab [al-Hamdāni, Iklīl VIII, 99 ff.]). Among the main centers of pre-Islamic pilgrimages in Yemen are the Awām-temple of the Sabaean national god Almaqah in Mārib, the temple of the Ḥaḍramitic national god Sīn Ḏū-Alīm in Shabwa, and Yaṯul (Barāqish) in the Jawf.[15] Data about pilgrimages from Old South Arabian inscriptions indicate both communal practices and rites exclusive to individual deities. Basically, two verbal stems are used with the meaning, "to perform a pilgrimage," *hwfr* and *hḥḍr* (Sab.Dict., 157 ff., 66). Further, the phrase *qs*^{1}*d* also means "pilgrims;" [see *qs*^{1}*d / s*^{2}*ʿbn / s*^{1}*mʿy* "pilgrims of the tribe Sumʿay" (RES 4176/14)], *ḥgg* "to perform a pilgrimage" (Sab.Dict., 66) and *s*^{1}*bʾ* "to carry out an undertaking, e.g., religious pilgrimage" (Sab.Dict., 122).

Since the main topics of the aforementioned inscribed sticks are themes from everyday life in ancient Yemen, we now have some data about the activities of private individuals, such as the performance of pilgrimages by ordinary

15 Cf. Ryckmans 1993: 379ff.; Müller 2002: 178ff.

people like the woman Ḥaywšāf. Hitherto, only a few texts among the inscribed sticks that have been deciphered deal specifically with pilgrimage. For example, there is a text engraved on a palm leaf stalk in the collection of Munich (X.BSB 105 = Mon.script.sab. 124) that records a pilgrimage. [16]

The most important pilgrimage festival was undertaken for the god Almaqah to his central temple, the Awām. This was celebrated every year in the Sabaic month of Ḏū-Abhay (similar to Ḏū Al-Ḥiǧǧa in the Islamic calendar). This is verified by several Sabaean inscriptions; for example, YM 375/4-6. A number of Sabaean inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqīs also mention pilgrimage (Ja 669/14-15). It should also be noted here that the AFSM excavations carried out in the Awām temple from 2004 to 2007 have uncovered even more inscriptions left by pilgrims [i.e. MB 2004 I-109, MB 2004 S I-62, (Maraqten, unpublished)].

Another record of a pilgrimage to Marib comes from Sabaean inscriptions of the order of the god Ta'lab for Sumʿay, north of Ṣanʿāʾ: The citizens are told that they should not fail to undertake a pilgrimage to Almaqah in Mārib during the month of Ḏu-Abhay (RES 4176/1). This edict, forming one of the most important sources for pilgrimages in Ancient Yemen, provides good data about pilgrimage to the god Taʾlab; some key pilgrimage rites even bore functional similarities to Islamic *manāsik Al-ḥaǧǧ* "ritual rules of pilgrimage."

Sacrifice was an important part of the pilgrimage festival, and also occurred during the month Ḏū-Abhay, as stated in the above-mentioned inscriptions (Ryckmans 1993: 366 ff.). Sacrifices for the god Almaqah were actually carried out on a specific day, namely the seventh day of the month Ḏū-Abhay, as attested by some inscriptions engraved on altars such as the slaughter altar [e.g. Museum of the Department of Archeology and Museology, Riyadh University, No. 74, 76, (Ṭayrān 2003: 245ff)]. There may have been specific types of altars only associated with pilgrimages, such as the *mḥḍrt*-altar (Maraqten 1994: 169). It is significant that families used their own altars during pilgrimages (RES 4482 = CIH 670, cf. RES 4484, CIH 694).

An inscription attesting the existence of *ms¹bʾ ʾwm* "the Road of Awām" also proves that the king was aware and responsible for the protection of pilgrims and the pilgrimage road (MB 2002 I-20, cf. Maraqten 2004: 157-163). The protection of pilgrims during their journey to Mārib was the duty of the king, and sometimes he took measures to protect them, as stated in one Sabaean inscription from the Maḥram Bilqīs: It mentions an high officer (*mqtwy*) sent to Mārib by order of the king Šammar Yuharʿiš, king of Sabaʾ and Ḏū-Raydān [(ca. early 3rd century CE) to oversee the performance rites of the pilgrimage in the city of Mārib in (the month of) Ḏū-Abhay' (Ja 651].

Pilgrimages were also organized for local gods such as Taʾlab, the god of Sumʿay in northern Ṣanʿāʾ. The god ordered the people to carry out a pilgrimage to the god Almaqah

16 On pilgrimage in ancient Yemen, cf. RES 4176, Müller 1997: 89-110, Müller 2002: 178f., and McCorriston 2011: 58-73; MB 2002 I-20, cf. Maraqten 2004: 157-163.

in Mārib and he forbade their being hectored in his region (RES 4176, Müller 1997: 89 ff.).

The text of Ḥaywšāf, daughter of Taḥylay, informs us that pilgrimage was performed for the god Qaynān in Šibām Al-Ġirās (Šibām Suḫaym), probably the central place for the worship of this god.[17] This is mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions. Qaynān seems to have been a local tribal god and appears frequently as *qynn / ʾlh / ḫs¹ʾm* "Qaynān, the god of Ḫāsiʾum" (CIH 8/2, 26/2-3, 560/4). He appears in the inscriptions only as *ʾlh / ḫsʾm* "the god of Ḫāsiʾum" (RES 4198 bis). The tribe of Banū Ḫāsiʾum living in Šibām, was subservient to the (*ʾdm*) of Banū Suḫaym. According to them, this city was called Šibām Suḫaym at the time (e.g. RES 3973, 3975). However, it seems this deity was worshiped not only by the kindred tribe Ḫāsiʾum, frequently associated with Qaynān, but also by people from other tribes. In addition to our text, where the woman Ḥaywšāf, a servant of the Banū ʿUṯkulān was a worshipper of Qaynān, we have evidence from another Sabaean inscription mentioning a woman servant to the noble Sabaean clan Ḥazfarum, gave a dedication to the god Qaynān. This passage reads: *ʾmṯwn / ʾmt / bn / ḥzfrm / hqnyt / ʾlhhw / qynn / bʿl / ʾwtn* "Ama(t)ṯawn, servant of the tribe Banū Ḥazfarum, dedicated to her god Qaynān, lord of (the temple) Awtān" (CIH 560/4).[18]

The most significant contribution of our text to the history of Ancient Yemen is that it gives new data about pilgrimage in ancient Yemen and specifically pilgrimage for the god Qaynān. It also contributes to our knowledge of the status of women (Maraqten 2008: 231-250). Our text does not give details about the woman Ḥaywšāf and her status, only her patronymic name, i.e. the name of her mother Taḥylay and that she was a servant of Banū ʿUṯkulān. We do not know where she was living, possibly in Mārib or the Yemeni Jawf since our text came possibly from the Jawf, making us wonder why she went so far to perform that pilgrimage. Possibly the god Qaynān was a favorite deity of women, like the god Nasr (Müller1994: 91-107), or the goddesses *bntʾl* "Daughters of ʾĪl" (Robin 2000: 113-192). Another important aspect of our text is that it gives information about the everyday life of women in Ancient Yemen. Women are mentioned frequently on the inscribed sticks, especially in letters and business transactions. Thus the inscribed sticks provide a valuable ancient source for many aspects of the socio-economic history of Ancient Yemen.

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17 Cf. Höfner 1970: 277 and Robin 1982 I: 58, 97.

18 Further epigraphic evidence for the god Qaynān are in CIH 8, 2, RES 3973, 3974, 3975, 4648, 4654, 4659. Most are from Šibām Al-Ġirās (Šibām Suḫaym); cf. Bāsalāma 1990: 134ff.



Figure 6: The Zabūr-Script of our text (M-SAS 1) in comparison with the Musnad and Zabūr- Scripts of the Sabaean inscribed documents

References, sigla and Abbreviations:

References of the sigla of inscriptions are citied in the text of this article; cf. also Kitchen: 2000, Avanzini: 2004, and http://www.csai.humnet.unipi.it.

AHw	von Soden, 1965-1981
BSB	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
CIAS	Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes, (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres), Louvain, Peeters, 1977–86.
CIH	*Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum*, pars quadra, Inscriptiones ḥimyariticas et sabaeas continens. Tomus I, II, III, Paris: Reipublicae Typographeo, 1889, 1911, 1929.
Fakhry 30	Ryckmans 1952: 20-22; Höfner 1976: 34-37.
Ja	Sabaean inscriptions published in Jamme: 1962.
MB	Registration siglum of inscriptions discovered by the American Foundation for the Study of Man (AFSM) excavations at Maḥram Bilqīs (1998-2006).
Mon.script.sab.	*Monumenta scripturae sabaicae* [Sigla of South Arabian inscribed sticks in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich].
Mon.script.sab.	124 = X.BSB 105
Sab.Dict.	Beeston et al: 1982
PSAS	Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies
RES	Répertoire d'Epigraphie Sémitique, Paris 1914-.
RES 4176	Ghul , Beeston, Müller 1997: 89 ff.
YM	Yemen Museum, Ṣanʿāʾ
YM 23 251	Abdallah: 1994
YM 10 230	Maraqten: 2014
YM 10 826	Maraqten: 2014
TYA	Ryckmans et al.: 1994
X.BSB 105	Stein 2010: 374ff.

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Address of the author:
Mohammed Maraqten
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Seminar für Sprachen und Kulturen des Vorderen Orients-Semitistik
Schulgasse 2
69117 Heidelberg
Germany
E-Mail: maraqten@online.de

[ROSAPAT 10]

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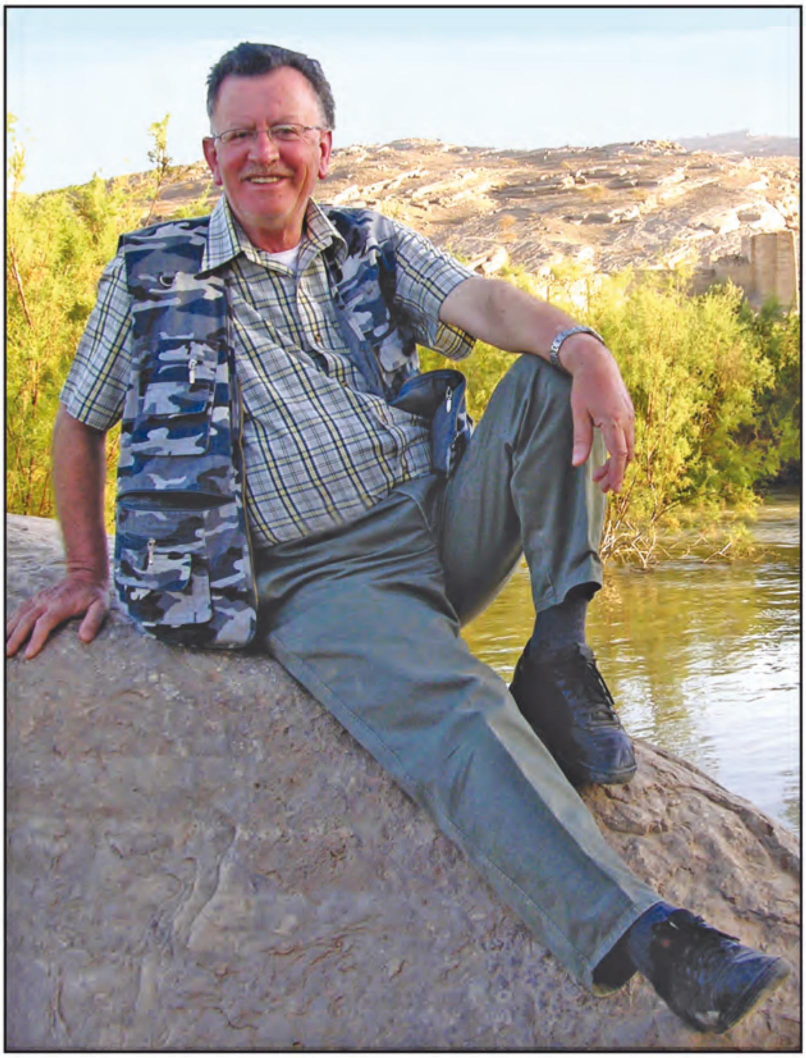
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